

U2 Plane

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# Crashes on Cuba Flight

STATINTL

KEY WEST Fla. (UPI)—A high-flying U2 reconnaissance plane crashed in the Gulf of Mexico Wednesday during an apparent surveillance mission over Communist Cuba.

The Strategic Air Command (SAC) said there was no evidence of hostile action and theorized the odd-looking jet plane experienced mechanical trouble.

Military sources in Washington, however, did not discount entirely the possibility of a Cuban attack on the U2, the intelligence craft that discovered the Soviet missile buildup in Cuba last year and has kept the island under surveillance since.

An air and sea search was launched immediately after the plane disappeared from land-based radar scopes at 10:32 a.m. EST Wednesday. Eight minutes later, a pilot reported an oil slick in the Gulf about 40 miles northwest of Key West.

There was no immediate word on the fate of the pilot, identified as Capt. Joe E. Hyde Jr., 33, of LaGrange with "no comment." No one answered the telephone at the home of Hyde's wife, Marianne, in Leeland, Miss.

SAC headquarters in Omaha, Neb., announced the crash. Sources said the pilot did not radio any indication of trouble, but the lack of such a report was inconclusive since the radio cuts off when the engine of the U2 fails.

It was the second known crash of a U2 "spy" plane during a Cuban overflight. Maj. Rudolf Anderson Jr., 31, of Greenville, S.C., was killed when a U2 went down in Cuba on Oct. 27, 1962, during the height of the Cuban crisis.

It was described as a sleek black U2, described by Allen W. Dulles, then director of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), as the most important espionage breakthrough of the 20th century. It was first spotted Soviet radar in Cuba in October, 1960.

The U2 was withdrawn after its "skippie" showing off to the United States and Russia that the U2 have